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Perry Deep mapping and emotion in place-writing practice

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Key Points

Key Points drawn from the Book Proposal Document

Cities, Sensibilities and Social Structuration

Chapter written in ‘a synthetic way, showing the theoretical and analytical connections existing between’ [the three dimensions], which are:

The three dimensions under study:

1. The articulations between urban experiences and social structuring processes
2. Sensibilities as an articulation point
3. Spaces that mark the body emotionally of the subjects that occupy them and that load these urban spaces with meaning, eg phenomenologically.

At present, the transformations of capitalism on a global scale have implied reconfigurations both in the ways of planning and organizing cities, as well as in the ways of living and feeling them.

Changes linked to the forms of consumption of the city and the land,

Appropriation and privatization of places collective, the strategic revaluation of urban times-spaces or the establishment of new centralities.

Different authors argue that the understanding of the social and economic changes that are currently observed in large cities should be analysed in the light of the new world economy,

proposing readings on the processes of globalization focused on the spatial reorganization of the economy (Sassen, 2006; 2000)

In this proposal, we chose to investigate urban scenarios from Sensibilities for two reasons: on the one hand, because it is a “little known” perspective that must be deepened to complex approaches to cities

[Spatial Practices] connect the social construction of the city and its spaces with the politics of Sensibilities. The latter are understood as “the set of cognitive-affective social practices aimed at the production, management and reproduction of horizons of action, disposition and cognition” (Scribano, 2017: 244).

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This chapter describes a new place-writing methodology, which uses deep mapping from archive material alongside a set of literary methods for travel writers to elicit emotional responses to experienced spatial practices. From the authors’ own fieldwork, a synthesis of the journey and urban scenarios will form the findings and the report of the place inquiry. Literary narrative is proposed as a sensitive writing form here that responds to affect and shares authors’ and readers’ sensibilities.

The complex two-theme, quest set by the research team will entail a sea crossing from England in search of an agricultural and production process that has been erased from the city of Cherbourg and its hinterland, the Cotentin Peninsula, Normandy, France. Perry production and distribution appear to have been lost from Cherbourg and its surrounding farmland; why has this mutation taken place? The second theme is in the symbolic realm. The writings of the literary theorist, Roland Barthes (12 November 1915 - 26 March 1980), will form an articulation point for place-inquiry. Barthes’ life has recently been commemorated in Cherbourg with an emotive statue in the city where he was born. This sculpture, *Metamorphosis* (2014) by Christine Larivière, loads the urban space of the Esplanade de la Laïcité with new meaning, which will be investigated by the writing team.

Literature review

Wolff (2014) identifies in the writing of W G Sebald a genre that she calls ‘literary historiography’ (Wolff 2014, 68); it is a layered hybrid discourse, she explains, which produces a ‘[n]ew form of transdiscursive knowledge, a specifically aesthetic knowledge, [that] emerges from this way of working through both material and text’ (Wolff 2014, 68). For Sebald, this material consists of newspaper advertisements read during his journeys, historical and everyday events associated with the places he visits, the emotionally-charged sojourns of writers at these places and his own sensibilities as he finds overnight lodgings or chooses where to dine. Arguably, it is the literary, or literariness of his writing on place that provides additional space for his sensibilities to be encoded and to generate an *affective* social practice for the reproduction of emotional engagement with places in the towns he has visited. The activities in the places that he stays are his actions driven by the historical events that have marked his body emotionally. In this passage from Sebald’s travel piece, ‘A Little Excursion’ in *Campo Santo* (Bell [trans.] 2005), all these elements are deployed with a narrative effectiveness to recount the story of a moment in history:

In the evening, I walked along the Cours Napoléon, and then sat for two hours in a small restaurant not far from the Gare Maritime with a view of the white cruise ship.

Over coffee I studied the advertisements in a local paper and wondered whether to go to the cinema. I like to visit the cinema in foreign towns [...] At about ten, therefore, I was back in the hotel where I had taken a room late that morning. [...] Traffic was still driving down the streets, but suddenly everything fell silent, just for a few seconds, until [...] (Sebald 2005, 15).

Benjamin (Underwood [trans.] 2009) notes that ‘true literary activity cannot expect to take place in a literary context - in fact that is the usual expression of its failure to bear fruit. Significant literary effectiveness can only come about within a strict interchange of doing and writing’ (Benjamin 2009, 46). In this interchange, he proposes publicity bills, newspapers and the prompt language of opinion to discretely oil the turbine that generates literature.

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In an experience economy and in co-creation of these experiences during leisure time and holidaymaking the processes of narrative knowledge offer a method of recording and creating simultaneously. The resulting mediated artefact of narrative knowledge then remains as an accessible object for sharing the experiential knowledge with other potential holidaymakers.

Methodology

The methodology for this place writing is practice-led. It makes use of, and tests the theory of the toureme (Mansfield 2015; [Mansfield 2018](#)), and also applies a set of travel writing methods currently under investigation; these are listed in an Appendix. The theory of the toureme was developed from Blanchot’s concept of the recounted story, *le récit*, discussed in [Mansfield \(2015, 195-196\)](#).

For Glen it is the sound etymology of the author's choice of character names, the mentions of traditional Breton costume, the period street furniture and verifiable geographical locations that all combine to satisfy what has been termed earlier as serious leisure (Chappel & Brown 2006) after Stebbins (2001). Here though, the practice can be seen to play out more fully where the reader-visitor shows himself to be making meaning from his previously held cultural capital, the pleasure he takes from seeing this capital both verified and extended by the realist literary text and his anticipation of seeing any final questions resolved in the present-day reality of the town. From this, coupled with the phenomenological aesthetic enjoyed by Marie and Antonio above, it can be proposed that moments of value occur during literary tourism which are pleasurable and, in certain instances, are also moments of knowledge creation. This research tentatively calls these touremes. A toureme must be a lived layer built upon, and including points from the novel, points which are held as real by the reader-visitor; the toureme must also call to the reader-visitor's mind their existing high levels of cultural capital and finally the moment of experience of the place, the lived layer, must include pleasurable elements from nature, the built environment and from the social. A toureme is the package of value and meaning that the visitor takes away from the holidaymaking experience, related to a particular spot and will form the centre of any narrative related to friends and family after the holiday. (Mansfield 2015, 195-196)

The data collection design for the Perry Project attempts to re-enact the production of the toureme during the fieldwork in Cherbourg with the participant team. Previous reading, which may be literary or from the participant’s own personal cultural capital interests will be

completed. This directed reading will have references to the places or socio-economic practices of this port city, in this way the reading will be in the form proposed by Onfray (????). During the fieldwork the participants will separate and, whilst taking notes, search for the places from their reading. On the spot, they take notes of their emotional and memory responses with a view to sharing them at the end of the reconnaissance. At fixed times the participants will gather so that their notes can be recounted to the other participants. Note: some method of capturing this moment is needed, and the conditions to encourage the relating process to be done in the *past* tense using method D13 from the list.

Places to visit

A three-stage methodological template for the analysis phase (AP) of place branding in tourism development management can be proposed:

- i. Desk research to identify 6 parts for the hexis, being: (a) 2 heritage sites, (b) 2 cultural sites linked with an author, and (c) 2 food and ethnobotany sites, often hotel as a start and end point and restaurant or plant centre.
- ii. Conversion of desk research to the Field planning *cahier des charges* (CDC). Using cartographic sketches to arrange the parts of the hexis topographically.
- iii. Creation of a place-making narrative for tourism planners and stakeholders, and city authorities in a form directly comprehensible to a public readership.

- 1 Barthes' birthplace, or the street if the house has gone, and his statue
- 2 Art Museum Thomas-Henry and the life of artist, Jean-François Millet (1814-1875) , who copied paintings from this collection when young to learn his craft.
- 3 Perry-making, pear-growing, museum and gardens of Emmanuel Liais (1826-1900)
- 4 Museum La Cité de la Mer
- 5 Hotel for walking routes
- 6 Restaurant

The article is a meticulous plan for sorties from the hotel to walk out to sites from our reading, how we will capture data in the field and then how we will report it and travel-write it back at base-camp.

Three expedition plans:

1. Derek in search of pears, perry and the changing economics of local pear orchards and brewing around Cherbourg.
2. Philipp in search of the house of the heroine in French biographical novel, and her journeys into Cherbourg centre. With some theory from Onfray.
3. Charlie on Roland Barthes' birthplace in the suburbs, his mother alone in Cherbourg and his new statue.

In narrative research methodologies, for example, in recounting personal stories, Dunne (2016) proposes a further step, which she calls restorying; 'The *restorying* or re-authoring process, in turn, involves constructing a revised narrative embedded with new personal meaning and emotion that results from the experience of this process' (Dunne 2016, 142). By working with co-authors in the field team, this restorying process can take place soon after data collection,

by providing an interested audience for the experiences of the day or half-day to be recounted, and re-worked with the D-Methods. In effect this step in the data collection becomes a performance which provides the opportunity to elicit the emotions that Dunne (2016) underlines in her methods work.

Bartlett's experiments with memory from the 1920s and 30s, as explained in Wagoner et al. (2019, 16-18) also furnishes a ready-made method for re-telling experiences from memory by case-participants which, after his work, shows how the re-teller makes qualitative changes as the experience is re-told. It suggests that memory is not a storage place but is transformative, in that it integrates the re-teller's own culture as it is mediated appropriately for the next group of listeners. The re-teller is thus an active subject, which, for this research can be considered an enrichment of the recalled experience. In this research the re-telling stage may be repeated after, say, the following day to allow this enrichment to develop further. In the context of this project, too, which is ostensibly seeking the lost perry-making industry, these two periods of organic change are echoed. The first is the fermentation of the fruit sugars, and the second, longer period, the malo-lactic fermentation converts L(-)-malic acid to L(+)-lactic acid.

Small stories

In 2020 Sylvie Patron brought together a collection of research on narrative using the term, 'small stories' (Patron 2020, 5). In this work the chapter by Annick Madec (Patron 2020, 267-283) unlocks very short observed and overheard scenes on public transport as a type of knowledge that is sensible or manifests a sensibility to social structuration and, in her examples, to the subtle indicators of social class, using a notion from Barbara Carnevali (Carnevali 2013, 30)

'En paraphrasant la définition hégélienne du beau, on pourrait donc définir l'esthétique sociale comme le savoir qui a pour objet la manifestation sensible de la société. Ce savoir considère la société comme un phénomène esthétique : tout ce qui est social apparaît en effet sensiblement, donc esthétiquement. Mais en quoi consiste et comment s'exerce concrètement cette forme de connaissance ? Et quel rapport institue-t-elle entre le savoir philosophique et les sciences sociales ?' (Carnevali 2013, 30)

This approach of assigning aesthetic value to captured scenes by articulating the mundane description with emotion can be seen in the travel writing of Annie Ernaux; notice her literary turn of the key *comme*, 'like' which unlocks the device of simile:

'In this scene a couple are waiting for a train which must take one of them: 'Le train que l'un des deux devait prendre allait arrive, comme la fin du monde' (Ernaux 2000, 107)' The verbs of movement are compressed here and shifted to an expectant imperfect tense generating tension and anticipation in true narrative sense in what otherwise would have been a documentary text' (Mansfield 2012, 57).

Ghost memories of home

One of the literary books the researchers use in this work is *For Freedom: The Story of a French Spy* by Bradley Kimberly Brubaker (Brubaker 2005). Although aimed at the young adult market, it is a valuable document of memory writing since the author has created a biography of the wartime memories of Suzanne David, from long meetings and interviews with David many years later in America. Of particular resonance with this work on Cherbourg is the emotional map Brubaker's story of the young singer traces for the researcher as reader. The

street where Suzanne, the girl, lives in the story is still easy to find on the map of Cherbourg. In the story, the occupying authorities have seized the space of her home, so that she no longer has rights to this territory (Sassen 2006). It is for the heroine and for the visitor-researcher a *toureme*, a space that marks the body emotionally and thus loads this street space with meaning, both for the occupier that was and the visitor that will occupy it.

The hexis and the 6-part diathesis

In Hervé Breton's consideration of how the writing subject creates narrative knowledge from lived experience (Breton 2019, 78-79) he draws upon Aristotle's concept of *hexis* to show how writers historicise elements of their knowledge to constitute them as available resources. In developing the methodology for this research, the process of historicising is achieved by use of the past tenses to recount the field experiences. *Hexis* is an arrangement or disposition. In fact, the French word, *disponible*, provides tension for an English reader; *disponible* translates as available, in simple terms, but Breton's subject holds an arrangement of collected knowledges, using and deploying them in combination, sometimes to recount story, sometimes to report history (Breton 2019, 78-79). In the methodology for this fieldwork, emotion experienced in place is sought out to act as a catalyst for the literary writing of the delivered outcome. Like an exquisite miniature, Thomas Mann paints a hexis of emotions in this scene from *Death in Venice* (1912). One of the characters travels by vaporetto through the port. Without spoiling the story, here is sufficient quotation to illustrate how sensual experiences of the urban tourist space are held arranged, and *disponible*, by the character, by the narrator, and by the readers. It communicates the emotional disposition of the character:

‘The atmosphere of the city, this slightly mouldy smell of sea and swamp from which he had been so anxious to escape - he breathed it in now in deep, tenderly painful draughts. Was it possible that he had not known, had not considered how deeply his feelings were involved in all these things?’ (Mann 1912, 231)

This disposition or hexis of emotions for Mann's character, mapped along his character's inquiring movement across the city, is the key to the method that will be applied for the inquiry into seeking out traces of the semiotician, Barthes, who was born here in Cherbourg.

Where is the centre?

Where is the centre of a city? City centres are a paradox in old sea ports. Apart from Venice, the sea is usually inaccessible to tourists once they have disembarked from their ferry. In tourism studies, the holidaymakers' hotel often becomes their centre, since this is where they first arrive to unencumber themselves of their luggage and travelling clothes, establishing a sanctuary for the duration of their stay. While for the day visitor, the centre may be the railway station, or the ferry terminal itself. In Roland Barthes' own example of travel writing (Barthes 1970, 44) he explores a city of which the centre is a void (Mansfield 2004, 155). In his exploration, then, Barthes turns instead to the railway station; it is a centre, he explains, but an empty one, devoid of spirit (Barthes 1970, 52-53). However, the careful reader of his city travel book is alerted to a metaphor which links the pleasure that Barthes the writer experiences at the point of departure, not the urban point of departure, *la gare*, but the point of starting to write, when all the elements are at his disposal for composition, and he is disposed to write:

‘Peut-être va-t-il à la gare parce qu'elle est le lieu de départ. Comme désir, la gare est le point dans la grande ville où se trouve le renouvellement du voyage et, pour Barthes, il y a un lien fort entre un lieu nouveau et son travail de l'écriture : ‘visiter un lieu pour la première fois, c'est de la sorte commencer à l'écrire’ (Barthes 1970, 51)’ (Mansfield 2004, 156).

What did Cherbourg railway station represent for Henriette in 1915? Was it her point of departure and arrival connecting her to her husband, who was often away at sea, or to her mother, Noémie in other cities? Was 107 rue de la Bucaille not home but a temporary resting place for the duration of her visit? One hundred years later the city council unveils a statue to her son in an attempt to create a new cultural centre for their city hidden away behind the old theatre in a non-place that has been a building site for as long as locals can remember.

The Place-Writing

Using Method-D5: Henriette Binger was 22 and lived at 107, rue de la Bucaille when she became a mother on 12 November 1915. Her husband, her senior by ten years, had been mobilised in the French navy. She was about to spend the second winter of the war at this address with her new-born baby. How would she [...]

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